

3-2560
PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN CITY
JOHN LENNON

NOVEMBER 8, 1978
SERIES 7 NO. 6

HOUSTON, TEXAS
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

NARR: THE CITY OF HOUSTON, TEXAS... FIFTH LARGEST CITY IN THE
NATION, AND GROWING ... LARGEST PETROCHEMICAL COMPLEX
IN THE WORLD, AND GROWING...ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S DOMINANT
CENTERS FOR RESEARCH IN MEDICINE, ENERGY AND OUTER SPACE --
AND GROWING...

HOUSTON TEXAS, SPRAWLING ACROSS WHAT WERE ONCE THE
MARSHLANDS AND WINDSWEPT PRAIRIES OF THE TEXAS COAST OF
THE GULF OF MEXICO, NOW OFFERS MORE JOBS, LOWER TAXES
AND GREATER ECONOMIC STABILITY THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER MAJOR
CITY IN THE UNITED STATES. AND, WITH THOSE ATTRACTIONS
AS WELL AS OTHERS, HOUSTON IS GROWING...ATTRACTING PEOPLE
FROM ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. HERE IS A.R. SCHWARTZ,
A MEMBER OF THE TEXAS STATE LEGISLATURE, FROM THE NEARBY
TOWN OF GALVESTON.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- SCHWARTZ

"WE ARE NOW IN AN AREA OF TWO TO TWO-AND-A-HALF MILLION
PEOPLE, AND HOUSTON TEXAS ATTRACTS ANOTHER ONE THOUSAND
PEOPLE A WEEK AS NEW IMMIGRANTS, FROM NEW YORK, AND
CALIFORNIA, AND CHICAGO, AND EVERY PLACE IN THE COUNTRY --
NOT JUST THE UNITED STATES, BUT THE WORLD, ACTUALLY."

TAPE: SEGUE TO CUT TWO -- "HOUSTON" AS SUNG BY DEAN MARTIN --
UP FULL FOR :28, THEN UNDER NARRATOR -- HOLD BRIEFLY,
THEN OUT -- CUT TOTALS :40

NARR: THE POPULARITY AND GROWTH OF HOUSTON WERE NOTED IN SONG
SEVERAL YEARS AGO, BY RECORDING STAR DEAN MARTIN -- WHOSE
BALLAD LEFT THE MESSAGE THAT ANYONE FACING HARD TIMES
COULD FIND A BETTER LIFE IN THAT TEXAS CITY. WHY IS LIFE

NARR: BETTER IN HOUSTON? THE ANSWERS ARE MANY, AND COMPLEX --
CONT) BUT A FEW GENERAL ELEMENTS CAN BE IDENTIFIED.

ONE IS ENERGY, A CATEGORY THAT CAN BE BROKEN DOWN INTO SMALLER SEGMENTS. FIRST OF ALL, HOUSTON IS LOCATED IN EAST TEXAS -- A REGION WHICH, FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, PROVIDED MUCH OF THE NATION'S OIL AND NATURAL GAS. IN RECENT YEARS, DWINDLING RESERVES COMBINED WITH SHARP INCREASES IN DRILLING COSTS HAVE SERVED TO LESSEN THE AREA'S STATURE AS A SOURCE OF FUEL. BUT HOUSTON STILL REFINES ONE-FOURTH OF THE NATION'S OIL SUPPLY -- AND MANUFACTURES THOUSANDS OF PETROCHEMICAL PRODUCTS THAT ARE SHIPPED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND THE WORLD.

THE SECOND ENERGY FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO HOUSTON'S POPULARITY IS ITS WEATHER. MANY AMERICANS WHO MOVE THERE COME FROM THE NORTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY -- WHERE WINTER FUEL BILLS ARE COSTLY. THE HIGH PRICE OF ENERGY HAS PROMPTED MILLIONS OF AMERICANS TO MAKE NEW HOMES IN THE WARMER SOUTHERN TIER OF STATES, KNOWN AS THE "SUN BELT" -- AND BY MOST ACCOUNTS, HOUSTON HAS BECOME THAT BELT'S GOLDEN BUCKLE.

ANOTHER MAJOR ATTRACTION FOR HOUSTON IS ITS ECONOMY. FEEDING, AND BEING FED BY, ITS GROWTH IN POPULATION, HOUSTON ADDED 75-THOUSAND NEW JOBS IN 1977 ALONE -- IN PETROCHEMICAL PLANTS, TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND SERVICE INDUSTRIES. GOVERNMENT SERVICES ARE LOW -- AND SO ARE TAXES -- ECONOMIC CONDITIONS CONSIDERED TO BE FAVORABLE DURING A PERIOD IN AMERICAN LIFE WHEN MORE AND MORE VOTERS

NARR: ARE VOICING PROTESTS AGAINST THE HIGH COSTS OF
(CONT) GOVERNMENT.

AND A THIRD MAJOR FACTOR IN HOUSTON'S POPULARITY IS --
HOUSTON'S POPULARITY ... THE IMAGE OF A CITY WITH MUCH TO
OFFER, WITH MONEY TO SPEND, WITH ROOM TO GROW. ONE
MEASURE OF THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE PEOPLE OF HOUSTON CAN
BE FOUND IN THE FIELD OF SPORTS. PROFESSIONAL AND
AMATEUR TEAMS IN SEVERAL MAJOR SPORTS HAVE COMPETED FOR
YEARS IN HOUSTON UNIFORMS -- AND, WINNING OR LOSING, THEY
ALWAYS DRAW LARGE CROWDS.

0 TED NANCE IS A LONG-TIME
OBSERVER OF SPORTS IN HOUSTON.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- NANCE

Q "HOUSTON'S A VERY GOOD SPORTS TOWN. WE USUALLY HAVE
GREAT TURNOUTS, AND THE CROWDS ARE USUALLY PRETTY
ENTHUSIASTIC. THE FACT THAT THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE
A. IN HOUSTON FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY HAS A LOT TO
DO WITH IT TOO, BECAUSE IT SEEMS LIKE NO MATTER WHICH
TEAM IS PLAYING HERE IN HOUSTON, YOU HAVE A LARGE NUMBER
OF PEOPLE FROM THAT AREA WHO COME OUT TO SUPPORT THEM.
AND THEN, OF COURSE, YOU HAVE THE LOCAL FANS TO SUPPORT
THE HOME TEAM -- SO IT MAKES FOR A REAL GOOD GAME."

NARR: MOST OF THE CITY'S MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS TAKE PLACE IN
0 A STADIUM, SEATING UP TO 60-THOUSAND SPECTATORS, WHICH --
LIKE SO MANY OTHER ASPECTS OF LIFE IN HOUSTON -- HAS SET
A PRECEDENT FOR THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. THE STADIUM IS
Q CALLED THE ASTRODOME -- SO NAMED, BECAUSE IT WAS THE
FIRST ONE IN THE COUNTRY TO BE ENCLOSED...TO HOST OUTDOOR
A. SPORTING EVENTS UNDER A ROOF. PAUL DARST IS AN ASTRODOME
OFFICIAL.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- DARST

O
R
"THEY DECIDED THEY NEEDED SOME KIND OF FACILITY TO PROVIDE FOR THE HOUSTON FANS, WHICH WOULD MAKE IT MORE COMFORTABLE TO WATCH BASEBALL AS WELL AS OTHER EVENTS. SO THEY CAME UP WITH THIS IDEA FOR A COVERED STADIUM, AND BUILT THE STADIUM IN APPROXIMATELY TWO YEARS. IT WAS OPENED ON APRIL 9, 1965. IT HOUSES EVERYTHING (INCLUDING) BASEBALL, FOOTBALL, MOTORCYCLE RACES, AUTO THRILL SHOWS, RODEOS, TRACTOR (PULLING CONTESTS)-- YOU NAME IT, JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING HAS BEEN STAGED HERE."

A.
(QUESTION:) "AND THE WEATHER IS NO PROBLEM?" (ANSWER:) "THE WEATHER IS NO PROBLEM, WHETHER IT IS RAINING OR FREEZING OUTSIDE IT IS (22 DEGREES CENTIGRADE) IN HERE. THE FANS LOVE IT, THE CHAIRS ARE COMFORTABLE, THEY ARE CUSHION-BACKED, THERE ARE NO SPLINTERS TO WORRY ABOUT."

(QUESTION:) "AND THE ROOF DOESN'T LEAK?" (ANSWER:) "THE ROOF DOES NOT LEAK."

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- STADIUM CHEERING -- SNEAK UNDER FOR :05 THEN UP FULL FOR :10, THEN UNDER AND SLOWLY OUT -- TOTAL :25

NARR: IF THE CITIZENS OF HOUSTON ENJOY THE SPORTS ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY THE ASTRODOME, SO DO THEY ALSO MAKE USE OF THE MANY OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE CITY'S CULTURAL LIFE. IN THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES, HOUSTON HAS BECOME A CULTURAL LEADER -- SUPPORTING ITS OWN OPERA COMPANY, A RESIDENT BALLET TROUP, NUMEROUS LIVE THEATER PRODUCTIONS AND AN INTERNATIONALLY-ACCLAIMED SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.

TAPE: CUT SIX -- AUERBACH

"THE AUDIENCE HERE IS A YOUNG AUDIENCE, PREDOMINANTLY YOUNGER THAN THE AUDIENCES I HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED WITH IN NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON."

NARR: MARK AUERBACH HANDLES TICKET SALES FOR MANY OF HOUSTON'S LIVE MUSICAL AND STAGE PERFORMANCES -- AND HAS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO GET A PROFILE OF THE AUDIENCE.

TAPE: CUT SEVEN -- AUERBACH

0
2
A. "A LOT OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME INTO HOUSTON HAVE COME FROM THE EAST COAST AND THE WEST COAST, AND ARE VERY INTERESTED IN THE ART. THE AUDIENCE THAT HAS BEEN SUSTAINING THE ARTS FOR THE MANY YEARS THAT (WE HAVE HAD PERFORMING ARTS) HAVE BEEN BRINGING THEIR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN. SO, THE ARTS AUDIENCE CONSTANTLY GROWS IN HOUSTON. WHEN I CAME IN APRIL, (1977), THERE WAS A VARIETY OF PERFORMANCES, MOST OF THEM WELL-ATTENDED-- BUT THE ATTENDANCE FIGURES KEEP ON GOING UP, BOTH ON SUBSCRIPTION AND ON SINGLE TICKET SALES. AS FAR AS SUBSCRIPTION GOES, THE GRAND OPERA IS ALMOST 90 PERCENT SUBSCRIBED ON ONE OF ITS SERIES AND THE HOUSTON BALLET IS (MORE THAN HALF) SUBSCRIBED. AS FAR AS SINGLE TICKETS GO, THESE ORGANIZATIONS ARE SELLING OUT ANYWHERE FROM 80 TO 90 PERCENT CAPACITY OF THEIR AVAILABLE TICKETS FOR MOST PERFORMANCES.

"WHAT IS HAPPENING IS THAT HOUSTON HAS BECOME A CITY WHERE MAJOR COMPANIES ARE WILLING TO TRY OUT NEW WORKS, NEW PROGRAMS, AND TRY THINGS OUT BEFORE THEY TAKE THEM TO NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON."

TAPE: CUT EIGHT -- MUSIC, SNEAK FOR :20, THEN UP FULL BRIEFLY, THEN UNDER NARRATOR AND HOLD

0
Q
A. NARR: JUST AS NEW WORKS ARE TRIED IN HOUSTON BEFORE GOING ELSEWHERE, SO DO THE CITY'S ESTABLISHED CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS MAKE GUEST APPEARANCES IN THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD. AMONG THESE IS THE HOUSTON SYMPHONY, CONDUCTED HERE BY LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI, PERFORMING A CHOPIN PRELUDE IN D. MINOR.

TAPE: CUT EIGHT -- MUSIC UP FULL -- CAN BE FADED AT 1:00 OR 1:10 -- OR PLAYED INFULL -- TOTAL 2:25

NARR: WITH THE ECONOMY OF A BOOM TOWN, AND THE CULTURAL LIFE OF A MUCH OLDER CITY, HOUSTON IS, IN MANY WAYS, UNIQUE AS AN AMERICAN URBAN CENTER. BUT IT SHARES SOME OF THE PROBLEMS OF OTHER CITIES -- AND ADDS SOME OF ITS OWN.

NARR:
(CONT)

CRITICS OF HOUSTON POINT OUT THAT THE FAST GROWTH OF THE CITY HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO OCCUR PRIMARILY BECAUSE THERE IS NO MASTER PLAN -- NO ZONING LAWS TO RESTRICT LAND USE, OR TO PRESERVE AREAS FOR RESIDENTIAL OR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT. THIS HAS LED TO AN URBAN SPRAWL THAT HAS NO DISCERNIBLE PATTERN -- AND MAKES IT HARD FOR THE STEADY STREAM OF NEW-COMERS TO FIND THEIR WAY AROUND TOWN.

HAPHAZARD DEVELOPMENT HAS ALSO MADE IT DIFFICULT TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF MASS TRANSPORTATION -- AND SO, LACKING BUSES AND SUBWAYS, THE CITY STREETS ARE CONSTANTLY CLOGGED WITH SLOW-MOVING STREAMS OF AUTOMOBILES. THIS TRAFFIC CONGESTION HAS SPAWNED NUMEROUS PROBLEMS IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH IS POLLUTION -- DIRTY AIR THAT OFTEN HANGS LIKE AGRIMY SHROUD OVER THE SHOULDERS OF THE CITY, HELD STATIONARY BY CURRENTS OF HUMID AIR OFF THE GULF OF MEXICO.

AND, BECAUSE TAXES ARE LOW, THERE IS LESS MONEY IN HOUSTON THAN IN OTHER MAJOR CITIES TO PAY FOR POLICE -- SO, THE CRIME RATE CONTINUES TO CLIMB RIGHT ALONG WITH THE CITY'S RATE OF ECONOMIC EXPANSION.

DESPITE THESE AND OTHER PROBLEMS, CITIZENS OF HOUSTON -- NATIVE BORN, OR NEWLY ARRIVED -- LIKE THEIR CITY BECAUSE, THEY SAY, THE QUALITY OF LIFE THERE IS BETTER THAN ALMOST ANYWHERE ELSE. ONE OF HOUSTON'S MOST FAMOUS RESIDENTS PUTS IT THIS WAY.

TAPE: CUT NINE -- ALAN BEAN

"I THINK THE THING THAT MAKES HOUSTON SUCH A GOOD PLACE IS A SUPER-PROGRESSIVE ATTITUDE BY THE PEOPLE."

NARR: HE IS ASTRONAUT ALAN BEAN, A MAN WHO HAS BEEN TO THE MOON AND TO MANY OF THE MAJOR CITIES ON EARTH...AND WHO SAYS HE WOULD RATHER LIVE IN HOUSTON THAN ANY PLACE ELSE.

TAPE: CUT TEN -- BEAN

"IF YOU WANT TO START A BUSINESS IN HOUSTON, YOU CAN FIND PEOPLE TO HELP YOU DO IT, LEND YOU THE MONEY, GIVE YOU THE ADVICE YOU NEED -- PLUS, THEY THINK YOU CAN MAKE IT. IF YOU NEED TO DO ANYTHING IN HOUSTON YOU CAN FIND PEOPLE THAT BELIEVE IN YOU AND BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE OF YOUR ENTERPRISE IF IT HAS EVEN A LITTLE BIT OF SENSE TO IT. MANY OTHER TOWNS AREN'T THAT WAY -- AND AS A RESULT, YOU CAN END UP SPENDING A LOT OF TIME TRYING TO GET ASSISTANCE WITH NEW THINGS YOU'RE TRYING TO DO. HOUSTON HAS THE ATTITUDE THAT NEW THINGS ARE GOOD, LET'S GO IN THE DIRECTION OF THE FUTURE, AND WE'LL MAKE IT ALL WORK OUT. SO, FUNDAMENTALLY THAT IS WHY HOUSTON IS A GREAT CITY TO LIVE IN."

NARR: ASTRONAUT ALAN BEAN, INTERVIEWED AT THE JOHNSON SPACE CENTER IN HOUSTON, TEXAS.

ANNCR: YOU HAVE BEEN LISTENING TO A SPECIAL REPORT ON THE VOICE OF AMERICA -- A PROFILE OF AN AMERICAN CITY -- HOUSTON, TEXAS. THIS PROGRAM WAS WRITTEN BY JOHN LENNON, WITH PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE FROM NANCY LANG AND LISA KEATHLEY. YOUR NARRATOR WAS _____.

##

##

##

BML/PY